

i can't believe it's not (better)! by intergalactic

Series: [elaborate coffeeshop au extravaganza \[2\]](#)

Category: IT (Movies - Muschietti), IT - Stephen King

Genre: Alternate Universe - Modern Setting, Fluff, M/M, Slow Burn, Youtube AU, and also claire from the bon appetit test kitchen, and by plans i mean the vaguest ideas that may go nowhere lmao, anyway i love dumb stuff and cute things, anyway pls enjoy lots of love make some peeps, so we'll see, that's right babey i have slow burn plans for this bad boy

Language: English

Characters: Ben Hanscom, Beverly Marsh, Bill Denbrough, Eddie Kaspbrak, Mike Hanlon, Richie Tozier, Stanley Uris

Relationships: Beverly Marsh & Richie Tozier, Eddie Kaspbrak & Stanley Uris, Eddie Kaspbrak/Richie Tozier, Mike Hanlon & Eddie Kaspbrak

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Summary:

“What if we stopped calling it the Fourth Dimension, because that’s boring and dumb, and started calling it the Peep Dimension?”

eddie kaspbrak is a chef in the bon appetit test kitchen, and stars in their youtube series "gourmet makes", where he gets to do fun stuff like spent two full weeks recreating gourmet twizzlers and sharing his first taki with the entire internet.

richie tozier is a culinary school drop-out and former olive garden line cook, who runs a youtube channel where he does things like destroy his kitchen trying to make foods from movies and videogames.

also he would, and i quote, "die for eddie kaspbrak from the ba test kitchen."

1. has eddie seen this? (no, he has not)

It begins on a Thursday, which makes sense, given that Eddie has never had a good Thursday once in his life. Thursday birthdays? Disaster. Thursday Christmases? Dreadful. Don't get him started on the Thursday Thanksgiving of 2011, because it was one of the worst days of his life.

So on Thursday morning, when Eddie wakes up at 6:45 am and cracks open one bleary eye to turn off his phone's alarm, it makes sense that he sees Mike's text. Of course it would start on a Thursday.

have you seen this????

Eddie reads Mike's text twice before his brain can fully comprehend what he's looking at, and when he does he just puts the phone back down on his nightstand. Knowing Mike, it's probably the third video of a goat bleating oddly that he's sent around this week. Mike has an affinity for oddly-bleating goats, or oddly-quacking ducks, or any video where an animal does what it normally does, but oddly. No one has figured out how he finds so many of them or why those particular videos crack him up that much, but he has a new one to share at least once a week. Stan is convinced that @weirdanimal.sounds on Instagram is secretly Mike, but Mike always denies it.

Eddie is mostly passive to Mike's odd animal fascination, which is why he opts to put his phone down and crawl out of bed to go try and wake himself up in the bathroom instead. He has things to focus on right now, and all of them involve Eddie switching on his coffee pot while he brushes his teeth, and very little to do with a pig that oinks in its own unique way.

He splashes some warm water on his face, clearing the crusted sleep away from his corneas, and goes about washing his face properly and patting some moisturizer onto his skin. He wakes up at 6:45 to get ready because he knows this alone takes him about fifteen minutes, partly because Eddie is not much of a morning person, and partly because his moisturizer smells faintly of blueberries and maybe he likes to revel in it too much.

He pads back into his kitchen at 6:59, just in time to switch the coffee pot off and stop even a drop of it from burning. Eddie isn't picky about many things - although maybe Stan would disagree, possibly with an added eye roll - but his coffee is one of them.

The sun is bright outside, and Eddie can see the day rising through his kitchen window; it looks like the kind of early June morning that unfolds fresh, like spring-rain-fed flowers blooming. The a.c. in his apartment building is decent enough that he isn't sticky from the heat, but he can feel the crisp warmth of early summer enough from that view that he debates making his coffee iced. Then he remembers what coffee tastes like with ice cubes melted in it, and he ignores the idea.

Padding back into his bedroom, he picks out his outfit. They're filming today, so he thinks about this for longer than his usual thirty seconds. Stan had turned him onto capsule wardrobes the previous autumn, and Eddie has softly adopted the practice himself: he keeps a stash of simple work clothes for the season, all matchable, plain colours and fabrics, which can mix and match without thought. But he has cheated, and left space for fun filming outfits and thrift store finds and the kind of nonsense that reminds him of going to gay bars for the first time in college. He still thinks he can rock a mesh shirt, though, so maybe this isn't a totally bad idea.

He remembers Mike's message when he's walking into the ferry station, headphones on and travel mug in hand. Eddie files onto the ferry to Manhattan amongst the rush hour throng, and finds a spot to stand by the bough, knowing it's hopeless to try and find a seat. He opens the text and clicks the link, ready to spend the first half of his commute with some coffee and a decidedly odd goat.

Instead, the link sends him to a Youtube video titled "i would die for eddie kabsbrak from the ba test kitchen". Eddie nearly chokes on his coffee.

“Do we have any milk?”

Bev leans precariously into the kitchen, clinging to the wall, to see Richie Tozier, her roommate of two years and best friend of many more, standing in nothing but a pair of Spider-Man boxers, a smudge of flour on his forehead, surrounded by an army’s worth of baking ingredients. A camera is set up opposite their island, recording the scene like a tableau of the trials and tribulations of trying to be an adult after college.

Bev leans back out of the kitchen, sighing to herself.

“Bev? Beverly? Bevvie?” Richie calls. “Madam Marsh? Miss Marsh-un? Beaver-ly? Bevoluminous -?”

“God, yeah, okay,” Bev says, walking fully into the kitchen and, by consequence, into frame. She is wearing a tank top and pyjama shorts that say “eat the rich” on the ass, and resigns herself to the fact that this is almost a plus in the eyes of Richie’s audience.

“Do we have any milk?” Richie repeats, now returning to the process of sifting flour.

“I . . . didn’t you check?” Bev peers around at all of his supplies, brow furrowed, a small smile fighting its way onto her face. “Is this all the baking stuff we *have* ?”

“Possibly.” Richie winks at the camera, over-exaggerated and nearly tipping his glasses off the bridge of his nose; Bev pushes them back up for him. “And no, I did not check, because this is emergency milk. I wasn’t supposed to need milk.”

“And what is it that needs emergency milk?” Bev makes her way to the fridge to look inside, as if Richie hasn’t already done that - although, come to think of it, maybe he hasn’t. Sometimes he does get a bit side-tracked, and misses obvious stuff when he gets really into an idea. Like whatever it is he’s cooking now.

“You ever seen *Beauty and the Beast* ?”

“Are we talking live action, or . . .?”

“Animated, Bev. I’m not a fool.”

Bev turns slowly to level a flat stare directly into the camera. “And the evidence begs to differ.”

“ Anyway !” Richie exclaims, sliding closer to Bev to stage-whisper in her ear; the air he blows at her tickles, and she shoves a graceless hand over her giggles. “Stop makin’ fun of me in front of the audience, they’re starting to like you more! And you can’t even cook!”

“I can cook!” Bev protests, hands on her hips.

“Oh? And what, pray tell, dost thou cooketh, Miss Marsh?” Richie sets his bowl of flour down on the counter and begins puttering about in the fridge as he speaks.

“I make fucking fan- *tastic* potstickers!”

“Potstickers?” Richie sticks his head out of the fridge to look at her, and Bev kind of wants to wipe the shit-eating grin off his face. “You mean the frozen white-people dumplings you buy at Trader Joe’s?”

“Fuck you,” Bev says without venom.

“You wish you could!” Richie emerges from the fridge with a mini carton of milk held aloft, a Holy Grail for his baffling endeavour. “Behold!”

“You keep yelling like this, and we’re gonna get another noise complaint,” Bev snarks, leaning back against the far kitchen counter, just behind Richie’s antics. She much prefers to hang in the back of his videos when he gets like this, offering quips and absolutely no help, a fun background presence. She only likes to be center stage when she knows the subject, and this is way out of her comfort zone.

“The new upstairs people would never, they love me.” Richie grins at the camera. “I made them millionaire’s shortbread when they moved in, and now we’re, like, best friends.”

“You never make me millionaire’s shortbread!” Bev complains.

“That’s because you never ask for it!”

“I absolutely do!” This is the fun part for Bev: the bickering, the dynamic that comes so naturally to the two of them, which feels more like a clever performance when they do it on camera. She gets to feel like an improv comedian for a few minutes, take a dip into another world than her own, and she does appreciate Richie’s openness with his videos for that experience. “God, let me be decadent! Why am I not allowed to have a Daisy Buchanan moment?”

“Probably because I don’t want you to hit anyone with your car.”

“You know I don’t drive.” Bev filches a spare dried cranberry from a measuring cup full of them, balanced on a trio of baking cookbooks; Richie squawks in protest, but is too late to stop her.

“God, I have my milk, get out of my kitchen.”

Bev knows that this is another bit - Richie would never tell her something so blatantly rude if it wasn’t a joke. That, and she can see the slight upturn of his eyes that has marked his jokes since they were teenagers. So she goes along with it, rolling her eyes dramatically.

“Fine! Be that way!” She whirls around and stalks from the kitchen, back into their baking-free living room and the chaos of her temporary home office spread over the couch and coffee table. Bev resigns herself to writing up some more emails and finishing the wardrobe outline for her next shoot, trying to ignore the sounds of Richie’s nonsense coming from one room over.

Richie is her best friend, and Bev admires him for doing what he has. When he told her he was dropping out of culinary school, Bev thought he was out of his mind; but now she sees why he wouldn’t have survived something like that. Richie has a fighting spirit, true enough, but he needs some liberties, some creativity, or he might lose the spark that keeps him going. So starting a Youtube channel purely because he had wanted to cook the fancy turkey burger from *Parks and Rec* had been perhaps one of the best uses of his considerable skill in the kitchen.

She also definitely likes the fanmail he gets, particularly the ones that come with snacks. She knows accepting food from complete strangers is likely a terrible idea, but when they had still been a couple of idiotic twentysomethings three years earlier, working shitty jobs and internships and trying to still afford to live in New York, Bev was not about to turn down free cupcakes.

Richie has been clanging away for the better part of an hour when he sticks his head into the living room; somehow, he's gotten more flour on himself, and has a smear of mystery grey stuff down the front of his apron. "Did you wanna try? I need another taste-tester."

Bev sighs, the sigh of the long-suffering, but stands anyway; abandoning her sixth bureaucratic email of the day feels just as good as she thought it might.

"As long as you don't poison me."

"I would never!" Richie clutches a hand over his heart, mocking offense as Bev passes by him and glides into the kitchen in her monkey socks. "Well, not intentionally."

WHAT WAS THE GREY STUFF???? (making the feast from *Beauty and the Beast*)

[Richie Tozier slides into view of the camera, wearing a Babar the Elephant apron and Spider-Man boxers; he is covered in baking ingredients.]

"What's up, nerds, I'm back and things are . . . well, I guess they could be going worse!"

[Cut to a close-up of Beverly Marsh's face as she takes a bite of something from a fork. She looks at Richie in disgust, and makes a

gagging sound. She forces herself to swallow it, then glares at Richie.]

“God, you are absolutely trying to poison me!”

The Bon Appetit test kitchen is alive with the sounds of an early workday when Eddie arrives, walking with the determination of a man in a hurricane. Stan looks up from his laptop when Eddie passes him by, takes one look at the frown that has settled into the lines of his face, and turns right back to his inbox.

He spots Mike three minutes after dropping his things at his desk, as he's emerging from the pantry with his arms full of spices. His gaze meets Eddie's and he smiles, a broader, brighter smile than any old unusual goat video would get out of him. Eddie frowns harder in response.

“Did you watch it?” Mike asks, setting his precarious pile of spice tubs on Eddie's desk.

“Maybe I did, maybe I didn't,” Eddie says with a shrug.

He hadn't. He had taken one look at that title and immediately clicked away from the video, opening up the next one in his recommendeds without thinking, just to escape whatever was waiting for him in the one Mike had sent. The rest of his commute had been spent in rumbling nervousness and the sounds of an ASMR tour of the Solar System.

Eddie crumbles under about two more seconds of Mike's questioning gaze. He's a hard person to resist, and Eddie is nothing if not unfortunately honest with his friends. Maybe too honest, as Stan might argue. “Okay, so I didn't watch it.”

“What? The new Bachelor episode? Because I personally think that Marnie deserved better.” Stan pipes up from his desk, a mere ten feet

away.

“You think that about, like, half the contestants,” Mike protests.

“Tell me I’m wrong,” Stan sniffs, lips pursed the way they always get when Mike questions his opinions on the Bachelor.

“You’re not,” Eddie says, partly because he wants to get the both of them away from him for the rest of the day, and partly because Stan is sort of almost definitely right.

“Thank you,” Stan says, giving Eddie a small nod, and then instantly betrays him. “So what haven’t you seen then?”

“Oh, shit, I forgot I didn’t send it to you!” Mike pulls his phone out of his back pocket, convincing Eddie that he’s the worst person he’s ever known, kind eyes and excellent brownies be damned. “It’s this video _”

“It’s actually nothing that doesn’t matter and never will,” Eddie interrupts, which only makes Mike break out one of those bright, friendly grins. It feels deceiving when Eddie knows its at the expense of his sanity.

“Some guy made a video about Eddie -” Mike begins, and Stan immediately perks up.

“Wait, seriously? *About* Eddie?”

“Yeah, it’s, like, twenty minutes long, and it’s kind of adorable? I don’t know, man, but he hasn’t even watched it yet -”

“Eddie, what are you waiting for?” Stan gets up and marches over to Eddie’s desk, deftly sliding Eddie’s desktop keyboard towards himself to pull up Youtube. “We’re doing a screening of this right now.”

Eddie slowly smacks his forehead on his desk, hiding his head in his arms. “I hate both of you,” he mumbles, though he isn’t sure if either of them hear him.

“Dude.” Mike is gently coaxing Eddie up from his desk, so he can face his computer screen. Stan has the page set up and ready to go,

though the pair of them seem to be more focused on watching Eddie than they are on the actual video.

“I promise it’s not weird, like those comments under your videos -” Mike starts to reassure him, and Stan cuts in.

“- or those subreddits about you, or Twitter threads full of screenshots of just your hands -”

“- nothing like any of that,” Mike finishes. “I swear to God, it’s genuinely just someone who thinks you’re cool.”

“You swear?” Eddie repeats. Now he’s thinking about all those subreddits and Twitter threads, and how uncomfortable they all make him whenever he finds one. Those screenshots of his hands may have been mysterious and odd, but were definitely on the tamer end of the internet’s preoccupation with him.

“I swear.” Mike puts one hand over his heart, and gives Eddie a solemn, formal nod. “If I’m wrong and you get weirded out, I get you coffee until next Thursday.”

That is tempting - most of the staff have a nearby coffeeshop they frequent, and the prospect of free mochas and americanos for the next week seems like a fair enough consolation prize for his suffering.

Eddie sighs, long and dramatic, and faces the computer screen. “Well, I’m already in a state of perpetual torment and horror anyway, so fuck it. Might as well.”

“That’s the spirit!” Mike says, and hits play.

i would die for eddie kaspbrak from the ba test kitchen

[Richie Tozier, wearing sweatpants and a tank top under his flowery apron, is standing in the middle of his kitchen. He waves at the camera, grinning; his glasses slip down his nose slightly, and he pushes them back up without even thinking.]

“So, I would die for Eddie Kaspbrak from the BA test kitchen.”

[Bev Marsh, dressed up for a meeting, ducks into frame. She has one eyebrow raised at Richie, and she crosses her arms over her chest.]

“Yeah, we know.”

“But they don’t! The people need to be informed, Beverly!”

[Bev rolls her eyes and walks off-camera, though a distant “i’m sure they do” can be heard before a door closes. Richie just looks at the camera, face painted in melodramatic disbelief.]

“Can you believe some people? *Honestly* . Now, back to the matter at hand: Eddie Kaspbrak from the BA test kitchen.”

[Cut to a clip of Eddie Kaspbrak From The BA Test Kitchen, who is trying (and failing) to use a Staples-brand can of air to smooth out the tops of his homemade Reese’s cups. He squints into the pan, and his nose crinkles in disgust.]

“Mike, why am I doing this? This is such a bad idea, there’s something coming *out of this* , what if it’s poisonous - Mike?”

[Cut back to Richie, who is standing in his kitchen with both hands clutched over his heart.]

“ *That* is Eddie Kaspbrak from the BA test kitchen. So, while I explain why I would die for him, I’m gonna recreate one of his Gourmet Makes recipes because why wouldn’t I? Based on the poll I put out on Twitter, we’re makin’ Peeps today everybody!”

[Cut to Richie leaning over a food processor in his kitchen; when he opens the top, a cloud of pink powder puffs directly into his face, sending him into a coughing fit. Cut back to Richie pre-Peep adventure, grinning like he doesn’t know the trials ahead of him.]

“Let’s get started!”

[Cut to Richie standing at an island counter in his kitchen, baking sheets and parchment paper scattered before him. He starts sketching Peep dimensions with a sharpie.]

“So, reason number one that I would die for Eddie Kaspbrak from the BA test kitchen: he’s a genius. He makes snacks the way Einstein made . . .” [Richie trails off, looking off into the distance.] “. . . did Einstein make stuff? Did he ever invent a thing?”

[Cut to Richie, having abandoned his parchment paper and baking sheets, reading off of his phone.]

“According to interestingengineering.com, Albert Einstein invented the quantum theory of light, the special theory of relativity, avocado- avogadro - no, you know what?” [He looks up at the camera, mouth drawn into a stubborn frown.] “ *Avocado’s* number, and . . . black holes?”

[Cut back to Richie, who has returned to his parchment paper.]

“Eddie Kaspbrak from the BA test kitchen makes snacks the way Einstein made black holes and light, which is super fuckin’ cool. Also these are the Peep dimensions.” [Richie holds up the parchment paper to show the camera, like a small child with a macaroni art project.] “What if we stopped calling it the Fourth Dimension, because that’s boring and dumb, and started calling it the Peep Dimension?”

[Cut to a clip of Eddie Kaspbrak From The BA Test Kitchen drawing his own Peep dimensions on parchment paper, and going, “Dust them with cornstarch so you can disconnect your Peeps.” He pauses, and looks up at the camera. “Sorry, I just started thinking about a Peep sending in a missed connection thing to the, like - wait, f*** does the Village Voice still exist? That’s what that was for, right? Anyway, dust with cornstarch.”]

2. maybe he's shy??? (thatmunchlad liked)

Mike is standing in line to buy Eddie coffee, and Eddie is lingering just behind him and reading a book on his phone. He's told Mike that it's some smart-person-memoir of some kind, when really he's skimming through the new EL James novel out of morbid curiosity. So far? Pretty boring, and not nearly as much awkward sex as he was anticipating. Maybe he shouldn't be so secretive about it.

Mike is standing in line to buy Eddie coffee on Friday morning, which should be a sign that Eddie has freaked out about the video. And, in some ways, Eddie did freak out. He'd sat perfectly still through the entirety of the video, and then slowly closed the tab. Stan and Mike had watched him as he'd gently laid his head back down on his desk.

"You okay?" Mike had asked, sounding a tad remorseful. Eddie hadn't been sure if he wanted him to be or not.

"M fine," he mumbled. "Just gonna . . . think. Or something. Nap." And then he had waited for the both of them to return to their respective desks before standing up and moving on with his day like nothing had happened.

Something had definitely Happened, but Eddie is letting it Happen primarily inside his own head for the time being. He needs to think.

Mike had volunteered to buy him coffee regardless, because he was the best person in the world. Eddie had followed him two blocks from the office, to keep him company.

"Medium americano, right?" Mike asks, and Eddie nods, looking up from his phone.

"Yeah, thanks. You really don't have to do this," he adds, because it feels like a necessary thought to tack on.

"Don't worry about it, I made you watch the stupid thing," Mike says with a smile and a shrug. The epitome of cool and collected. Eddie tries often not to envy Mike for that.

When they reach the counter, there's someone new standing behind it. His nametag reads 'Ben' and he gives them a soft enough smile that Eddie can already feel his mistrust of a new barista waning.

"Where's Liza? She always works Fridays." Eddie tries not to sound accusatory, but damn is he failing.

'Ben' blushes and says, "Oh, I think she transferred to another location? So I'm sort of the new guy in town." He says this like an apology, and Eddie feels a bit bad for asking.

"Well, new guy in town, we will take one medium americano and one medium cappuccino, please." Mike has turned on his charming voice, and is smiling the way he does at new interns at BA. Eddie almost finds himself enchanted by him, and he's been used to Mike's charming antics for nigh on six years.

"Comin' right up," Ben says with a broader smile, and pulls out two medium cups. "Can I get your names?"

"The americano is for Eddie, the cappuccino is for Mike. I'm Mike," Mike adds, and does a self-conscious little laugh that Eddie knows he whips out in interviews, that makes him seem more relatable and easy to talk to. He could charm the pants off of any crabby executive in their building, without even realizing he was doing it.

Eddie just gives Ben a small smile of his own and closes his phone. What he wouldn't give for Mike's social skills at times like these.

They collect their drinks from Tonya, who has been making their coffees for a year now and already knows to leave Eddie room for cream in his americano, and start their walk back to the office. They're taking their time, and Eddie can sense the conversation coming before Mike even opens his mouth.

"So, the video completely weirded you out?"

Eddie sighs, and takes a long drink of his coffee instead of answering immediately. It is, after all, the direct result of Mike's assumption that he's uncomfortable. He wants to savour it as long as he can. He also really doesn't want to answer Mike's question.

"The video *didn't* completely weird you out?" Mike says, a grin inching its way across his face.

Eddie just sighs again and quickens his pace. Mike follows suit; he looks so delighted that Eddie can't help feeling a little annoyed by it.

"No, okay, maybe it didn't," he bites out, taking another long sip of coffee. It isn't that he doesn't want to hash out his thoughts about the video - he absolutely does. He thinks maybe if he figures out how to feel about it, maybe he'll be able to do literally anything without it flitting across his brain, derailing his train of thought. He can hardly take the quiet walk to and from the pantry without thinking about "themunchlad".

But he has little interest in hashing those thoughts out within ten feet of Mike's knowing grin. Like he has any idea of what's going on in Eddie's head. He probably does, because he's Mike, after all, but that doesn't mean Eddie has to appreciate the pleased look he's wearing.

"Look, I'm glad it didn't freak you out, because that stuff sucks," Mike says as they step through the front doors of their building. "But I can't help wondering . . ."

"What?" Eddie asks, wary, as they walk into the elevator. "What are you wondering? I get worried when you start wondering, Hanlon."

Mike rolls his eyes, still smiling. "Relax, just wondering if you think it's kind of . . . I don't know, sweet?"

"Sweet?" Eddie repeats. He's glad they're alone in the elevator for this conversation, because the idea of anyone from the Vogue or GQ floors catching sight of his fierce blush is one that will haunt his daydreams for weeks.

"Yeah. Like, I don't know, it's kind of adorable how moony-eyed he is over you, I guess." Mike shrugs as they get off on the Bon Appetit floor.

"Moony-eyed? How old are you again?"

"You're hilarious, Eddie," Mike says flatly, swiping his employee card to enter the hall that leads to the test kitchen. "I just think it's kinda

cute. Like a little kid with a crush on Orlando Bloom or something.”

Eddie eyes Mike as he takes a seat at his desk, depositing his coffee in exchange for opening up his email inbox, getting right to work. That, Eddie theorizes, is how Mike maintains his professional image: he constantly checks his email, even during work conversations. It makes him seem very busy and on top of his work. Unfortunately for Mike, it’s a trick that can’t fool Eddie or Stan, who know for a fact how much of his inbox is comprised of alerts from Bath & Body Works and the Coney Island Petting Zoo, to which Mike has an annual pass. (It’s roughly 56%, according to Stan’s calculations.)

So when Mike does this, Eddie knows it’s to seem as though he’s moving from their conversation and back to work. But Eddie isn’t going to let him go that easily.

“Orlando Bloom, huh? Pirates era, Will Turner Orlando Bloom?” Eddie smiles, light and cloyingly sweet and very teasing. “You have a thing for curly-haired, rule-following guys, Mike?”

Mike doesn’t look up from his email, but Eddie sees his neck darken with a self-conscious flush. “I don’t remember saying that.”

“Because you didn’t have to,” Eddie says, turning to unpack his things. He isn’t going to check his inbox for a minute, the same way he hasn’t really checked Twitter or Instagram since he saw the video: too many people were asking him about it for his comfort.

Mike says nothing else about the video that day, and stumbles over a joke when he catches Eddie watching him and Stan talking in the lunchroom. Eddie is delighted.

@kaspbrakkie: @eddiek have you seen @trashbandicoot’s video about u?? bc Wow

@sweddie: @trashbandicoot dude you really nailed everything we love about eddie, and like i can't believe you're the first person to really Talk About Him??? also your peeps were so cute i love them

@sweetsboyeddie: @eddiek @trashbandicoot would highkey be the cooktube crossover of the year

@bonappletea reply to @sweetsboyeddie: omg they'd be so chaotic pls pls pls !!!

@sweetsboyeddie reply to @bonappletea: hey @bonappetit @trashbandicoot this would be sick please and thanks

Richie Tozier is a semi-professional cook who makes recipes for a literal living. He also primarily consists off of microwave mac-and-cheese and dino veggie nuggets.

"They're veggie, not chicken," he says, holding up the box to show Bev as she walks into their kitchen. "Therefore: healthy."

"That's not true at all," she replies as she starts preheating the oven. "But I want the triceratops."

"Fine! But the T-Rex is mine!" Richie tosses her the box; she catches it deftly. Despite their lack of steady routine, they are a well-oiled machine of chaos. Bev almost knows Richie's next bit of nonsense before he even begins it.

But she doesn't predict the next thing to come out of his mouth. "Bon Appetit emailed me today."

“Hmm?” Bev looks over at him from where she has gone ram-rod straight, still leaning against the counter. She looks like she’s impersonating the world’s least chill adult at a freshman college party. “What did they want?”

“Nothing terrible,” Richie says, mostly to try and calm her down a bit. Bev doesn’t trust big corporations or companies very much, particularly after the harassment some of them have put Richie through for the sake of copyright infringement. “They just want royalties because I used so many clips of their show in my video. They were weirdly cool about it honestly.” Richie plays this off as casually as he can, though he had panicked when he spotted the email in his inbox that morning.

“Good.” Bev says this as though she would have to go and pick a personal fight with the CEO of Bon Appetit if they hadn’t been cool about it, and the mental image of Bev marching into an executive’s office with murder in her eyes makes Richie crack a fond smile.

“Has Eddie Kaspbrak From The BA Test Kitchen said anything about it yet?” Bev asks as she slides their pan of dino nuggets into the oven. She swings herself up onto the counter, legs dangling over the side of it.

Richie shrugs, feeling a twinge of uncertainty in his chest that is growing familiar in the aftermath of posting the video. It’s been almost a week since it went up, and there hasn’t been one word from Eddie Kaspbrak From The BA Test Kitchen about it. Richie is starting to worry that he’s creeped him out, and that he’s trying to avoid interacting with him.

But what Richie says aloud is, “Not a peep.”

Bev rolls her eyes. “Ugh, beep beep, asshole,” she snarks, though Richie can see the twitch of her mouth as she fights off a reluctant smile. “Pun not fucking pardoned!”

“Rude, Bevampira!”

Bev crinkles her nose in distaste. “Not your best work.”

“No?” Richie frowns as he pulls out his phone, opening up a new notes page. “What about . . . Bev the Barbarian?”

Bev makes a show of considering it, tapping the electric blue nail of her index finger on her chin. “No, I don’t think so. I miss Bevoluminous.”

“But I’ve already used that one!” Richie protests.

“Then maybe you shouldn’t waste them, if they’re such a finite resource!” Bev shoots back, laughing. “And, holy shit, you don’t have a fucking *list* of bad nicknames for me, do you?”

“You wish,” Richie says, head now buried in their fridge. “Planning a new video. What d’you think about the food in *Lord of the Rings*?”

“I think that it’s a good excuse for me to put elf ears on you again,” Bev says with a snort. “And that you need to just invent whatever the hell ‘second breakfast’ is supposed to be.”

“Yes!” Richie pumps one hand in the air, still rooting around in the fridge. “Second Breakfast coming right up!”

themunchlad i hope everyone likes the video!! what’re your favourite eddie kaspbrak from the ba test kitchen moments/recipes?? mine is probably the first time he ever ate a taki bc wtf dude

634 likes

tay hill omg bon appetit needs to invite you over!!! seriously, you and eddie would be so fun to watch, pls make it happen

203 likes

angie my fave eddie moment was the entirety of the reese's episode, because he really doesn't want to temper that fucking chocolate and i (pastry chef in training) relate

130 likes, thatmunchlad liked

thatmunchlad ugh yeah that's why i try and avoid stuff that needs it, but also the

shitty stuff can be funny too lmao

ayyyycocoa i miss the twinkie episode bc wow that's true Growth, also you guys would have great chemistry i'd love to see you do a video together

402 likes

mary mcdonald ugh i wish, but eddie's being kind of rude about it??? like he hasn't

said anything about the vid, and he's been ghosting his sm since it came out

reilly rowland maybe he's shy?? (maybe he thinks richie's cute lmao)

126 likes, thatmunchlad liked

reilly rowland fUCK RICHIE LIKED !!!?????

Eddie is in the bathroom, an hour before he heads home for the day, when he gets the notification. His phone buzzes, as though aware of the importance of this update, and when he checks the screen he nearly drops it on the bathroom floor.

He hadn't felt the need to switch off his notifications, despite the flood of messages directed towards him about themunchlad's video, because his notifications beforehand had already been filtered to just his mutuals. So he could keep up with Mike's goat video of the day, or the dumb inspirational quotes Jon their editor posted.

He hadn't expected the notifications to alert him of Stan's utter betrayal.

Eddie marches right over to Stan's desk the moment after he reads the tweet. Well, maybe a few moments after; he needs some time to compose himself, after all. That composition drops the moment he's standing next to Stan Uris, who looks up at him with neither pity nor remorse in his eyes. "Yes?"

"I cannot fucking believe you," Eddie says, voice curt and as loud as he can make it without yelling. "I cannot believe you would fucking - you know how - God, Stan, what the hell?!"

Stan raises a single eyebrow, impassive to his plight. "You weren't going to do it."

"I didn't think it fucking *needed to be done* !" Eddie is scowling, hard enough to pinch his face, but he continues as he stares down at Stan. "This would've just *blown over* -"

"Eddie," Stan says, weariness creeping into his voice. "You work for a magazine. You have a Youtube series. You know that this wouldn't have just 'blown over'. You know exactly how hard the internet would cling to it." He turns back to his computer, where he's going through a new recipe. It's for a butternut squash tarte tatin. Eddie distantly thinks it sounds absolutely delicious, and then reminds himself to be mad at Stan and not hungry.

"Maybe you're right!" Eddie scowls even harder at this admission, and the slight nod it gets from Stan. "But you still didn't have to - I could've handled it!"

"Eddie, you've been avoiding it for almost a week," Stan says. He isn't looking up from his recipe now, although Eddie can see a slight downward curve to his mouth, the barest hints of apology rising to the surface. He can sense an apologetic Stan, after years of mutual nonsense and squabbles over waffles and superhero movies and Eddie's various disastrous Thursdays, and is at least satisfied about the impending apology he'll receive by the next day. But he is still standing in the aftermath of Stan's fucking tweet.

"I know." Eddie bites down a sigh. "I know. I was."

"Are you going to -?"

"Yes, okay, I'll say something, *God*, don't fuckin' push it, Stanley." Eddie strides over to his own desk and pllops down in his chair.

Stan and Mike come to hover over his shoulders within minutes. He seethes a little bit, the lack of space itching under his skin, even if they are his best friends. "I didn't realize this was a group effort."

"Just to be safe," Mike quips from on his left. Eddie can hear his smile. "In case you try and say something awful."

"I just have to say thanks for the shoutout, how can I fuck that up?" he demands, whirling on them. Stan and Mike both back up, even though they know how little bite there is to much of Eddie's bark.

"You have to - well, shit, Eddie, you should interact a bit, you know?" Mike looks like he's trying very hard not to say something that will upset Eddie, which of course kind of upsets Eddie. "Just - don't bite his head off. Say something nice. Acknowledge him nicely, start a dialogue."

"Why do I need a fucking *dialogue*?" Eddie turns back around, facing the Twitter tab he has pulled up on his laptop.

"Because otherwise you're a jackass," Stan says; he clearly isn't here to mince words.

"I'm not a jackass," Eddie bites out, eyes narrowed as he focuses on the empty tweet he's trying to write. Since when did Twitter have this much thought put behind it?

"You kind of sometimes are, maybe a tiny bit," Mike says, and shrugs when Eddie glares at him. "Only sometimes! And you never mean to. You just . . ."

"You know what, I'm doing this later. I'm doing this later, and you two can fuck right off." Eddie closes the tab with a decisive click, and shoos Stan and Mike away from his desk. "I'm at work, and I'm getting work done!"

The moment they vanish off to their own duties in the test kitchen, however, Eddie pulls out his phone. He opens Twitter. He opens a new tweet, and he types, and he hits post before he can overthink any of it, before he can even really reread it once. He closes his phone and puts it in his desk drawer and tries not to think about any of it.

Of course, he goes home on the ferry that night thinking about it.

@thestanuris: That video about Eddie is spreading through the test kitchen like wildfire, please stop sending it to me, I've already seen it I promise.

@thestanuris: I can confirm that Eddie has seen @trashbandicoot's video. Please stop sending it to him, thank you.

@bonappletea reply to @thestanuris: OH SHIT !!!!!!!

@amunchylad reply to **@thestanuris**: !!!!!!!!!!!!!!! oh my god
!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

@sweddie reply to **@thestanuris**: why hasn't eddie said
anything???? is he okay????

Richie and Bev look down at their tray of dino nuggets, and let out identical sighs of disappointment.

"We're always so optimistic," Bev says, picking up a nugget between her fingertips and frowning at it.

Richie scoots a handful of them onto his plate, and some onto Bev's. "May as well eat whichever. Because absolutely none of them ever look like dinosaurs!"

Bev takes her plate and starts drifting into the living room, probably to flip on tv for them to eat dinner to. Richie follows, digging his phone out of his sweatpants pocket. He snaps a quick photo of his plate of nuggets, all amalgamous blobs, not a dinosaur in sight. He opens Twitter to share his sadness with the world, and nearly drops his plate when he takes a peek at his notifications.

His many, many notifications.

"Richie?" Bev asks this from the couch, mouth full of veggie nugget. She's watching him in concern, oblivious to the SVU cast putting a man on trial behind her. "Everything okay? Did they send another email?"

Richie shakes his head, slowly making his way over to the couch to take a seat next to her, holding out his phone like a holy text. Bev reads quickly, scrolls a bit, reads even faster, and holds a hand to her mouth. Her green eyes dart from phone to Richie to phone to Richie.

“You okay?” she asks again.

“I -” Richie stops, breathes, eats a nugget. They’re pretty good, though he still thinks the flavour is diminished by their lack of T-Rex resemblance. But still, pretty damn good. “I think I’m all good.”

@eddiek reply to @thestanuris: stan’s right, pls stop sending it to me, it’s all good

@eddiek: @trashbandicoot (seriously??) i don’t know what about my peeps breakdown you found so endearing - @thestanuris threatened to throw me and the peeps out the kitchen window. twice.

@eddiek reply to @sweetsboyeddie: anything’s possible

Notes for the Chapter:

hi everybody!! this will definitely be a Slow Burn, so i'm sorry if this chapter doesn't really move mountains in terms of plot progression lmao - i just like writing in this au, it's so cute and fun and sweet lmao

also that tarte tatin is a real bon appetit recipe, that is listed as a recipe for eddie's zodiac - the stars made him think it's delicious (although i firmly believe eddie thinks zodiacs are dumb, but secretly has a co-star app lmao)

ben and bill will arrive shortly, i promise

also i've figured out the other relationships in the fic,

but i'll only start tagging them when i start including them properly (am i hinting at stanlon?? yes)
and tysm to everyone who's sent some love to this fic, you guys are v sweet and lovely <3 <3

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if you'd like <3
<3

3. #thankseds

“Another video? He must really like you.”

“It’s almost like the title of the first one was him declaring his willingness to die for Eddie,” Stan says with a snort as he passes by Eddie and Mike.

“Would you both shut up?” Eddie mutters; his shoulders are bunching up around his ears as he shrinks into himself, and he can already feel the burn of his blush creeping up his neck. And he’s on camera, which is great. “You’re so unprofessional.”

“Awww, does Eddie *like* munchboy?” Mike teases, and laughs when Eddie shoves his shoulder. “Relax, it’s cute that you have a fan. Right, Jonathan?” Mike looks to the camera operator, who laughs, too.

“ANYWAY,” Eddie starts over, swatting Mike out of frame despite the tray of sugar cookies he’s carrying, “We’re making gourmet twizzlers today, because we can, and we’re gonna do it as far away from them as possible.” He looks to Jonathan and then their director, Brad, pleadingly. “We can cut some of that out, right?”

Brad nods, straight-faced as ever, though Eddie doesn’t think he trusts the gleam in Jonathan’s eye. Whatever. He has twizzlers to make, and not disastrous internet cooking shows to think about.

Though he has been thinking about themunchlad a lot.

Richie Tozier, as his bio names him, is a twenty-five year old from New Jersey, who is self-taught in the culinary arts, and recreates movie and videogame dishes for his youtube channel. Eddie had binged several of these videos the night he sent The Tweet, and had tried not to pay too close attention to Richie’s hands, which are long-fingered and expressive. He had failed pretty spectacularly.

The consequences - and yes, Mike, that was the right word - of The Tweet had been intense, to say the least. Eddie is still receiving replies that are just strings of exclamation marks, and it’s been six days. He’s barely touched twitter since, just a handful of retweets and

one dig at the New York public transit system (the same that he made on such a regular basis that his followers could practically predict the next one.)

Then, Richie Tozier - who frequently wears the Olive Garden line cook uniform he stole from his four month stint as one - released another video in which he recreated one of Eddie's recipes: Reese's cups. (Richie had suggested throughout the video that he was going to try the ones made with the compressed air Eddie had foolishly tried, chemicals or no. Eddie had chewed through a hangnail the entire time, hoping he wasn't actually stupid enough to go through with it.)

This second video had put the pair of them on the twitter trending page for a whole morning. #thankseds had been the first thing Eddie had seen on twitter that morning, and he hadn't exactly been thrilled at the nickname.

Mike and Stan had called him 'Eds' until he threatened Stan with a frying pan around five pm.

So, yeah. Eddie is pretty thoroughly involved with themunchlad now, their "culinary fates intertwining in the cosmos" as Richie had put it. He always seems to speak like that, in dramatic monologues or bad jokes. Eddie doesn't know how people can enjoy his content unironically like that, but he supposes some people will watch anything (see: half the Youtube trending page).

Eddie makes his way through Day One of twizzlers with nothing but strawberry reduction and Richie Tozier on his mind, which is frustrating and odd and he doesn't like it one bit. He thinks it's probably Mike and Stan's fault, talking about the guy all the time. Eddie can't seem to go ten minutes without a joke about Eddie's "superfan."

"I'm headed home now, so that none of you can enjoy my misery anymore today," Eddie declares to the test kitchen, which is populated by just Stan, Mike, and two other pastry chefs trying to make a pie-cake hybrid in the corner.

"We can do that without you in sight," Stan says without looking up

from his bowl of peach compote. “I know you’ll be miserable at home, too, so I can enjoy it remotely. Don’t worry about us, Eds.”

“You start that again and you’ll be the one worrying,” Eddie hisses, slinging on his backpack. Stan just rolls his eyes, because he’s the worst.

The trip home is spent ruminating even further on Richie Tozier, who is such a bizarrely chaotic figure online that Eddie is having a hard time thinking about his own joking hint at a possible collab. *Stupid, Kaspbrak*. The idea of getting into a kitchen, full of hot and sharp objects, is becoming less and less appealing the more of Richie’s videos Eddie watches. He isn’t sure if he’d survive the experience.

As Eddie finally collapses against the closed door of his apartment, exhausted from a day spent slaving over gourmet twizzlers and stressing about someone whose actual twitter username is trashbandicoot (because oh my *God*, Eddie still hasn’t let that go), he decides that the frozen butter chicken in his freezer and the rosé in his tiny pantry sound like an excellent Friday night dinner.

Eddie, ever a believer in true self care, takes a stupidly long shower and uses too much body lotion when he steps out, pink and clean and ready to spend the night on his couch. He sips a glass of rosé as he waits for his microwave meal to finish heating up. He smells of vanilla and feels fucking content, though the ever-present curiosity and worry surrounding themunchlad lingers in the back of his mind. But for just this moment, everything is nice and good and Eddie doesn’t need to stress. He can be chill. He can have a self care night on a Friday and not think about internet personalities who would “die” for him. He is all good, a-okay.

He turns on one of Richie’s videos on his phone.

It’s a video of Richie trying different old, nostalgic snacks from his childhood, and his friend and roommate, Bev, is there. She’s fiery and beautiful and has a wit sharper than Richie’s, though he never seems distressed by her comebacks or quips. They seem too familiar with each other, as though every comment Bev makes that could be considered rude or mean-spirited is actually part of some elaborate inside-joke. Eddie thinks he likes her; at the very least, he thinks she

brings a degree of common sense to Richie.

Not wanting to stare at Richie's charmingly crooked grin any longer, Eddie swipes away to check his email, leaning up against his counter. He deletes some spam mail, opens a message from Mike with a link to a fantastic eight-second video of a frog and a snail cuddling, and finally lands on an email from an unfamiliar address: admin.teenvogueweb@teenvogue.com .

Eddie frowns. Has he done something to warrant a scolding from Teen Vogue? Their offices aren't in the Bon Appetit building, as far as he knows, so he can't have even spoken to one of their employees rudely or anything like that. Besides, "admin"? Not human resources? What is happening?

He opens the email, and reads through it three times, just to make sure he isn't imagining or misinterpreting anything. When he's sure he knows what it says, Eddie slides down to sit on the (immaculately clean) floor of his kitchen.

To: Edward Kaspbrak, *Bon Appetit Magazine*

From: Teen Vogue Web, Administration and Creative Planning Department

Subject: Scheduling/First Meeting

Edward Kaspbrak,

I am writing to you as a representative of the Creative Planning department of Teen Vogue, in regards to the third issue of Teen

Vogue Web, an online-exclusive edition of our magazine, released monthly. We are hoping to gather the featured creators and figures of this third issue, which will be released for August 2019, and you are a creator we hope to feature. Please reply to this email if you are interested in participating, and we will be in contact with you regarding the details of the interview/shoot/etc.

Have a lovely day,

Audra Phillips, Creative Planner and Administrator

“Holy shit.” Eddie breathes, staring at his phone in astonishment. A “featured creator”? Him? What the fuck?

He does the only sensible thing: he calls Mike.

Reese Cups From The Recipe Of An Angel

[Richie Tozier sock-slides into frame, and he’s wearing an apron with the body of Captain American printed onto it. He’s grinning, and he shoots the camera finger guns. This, presumably, means he’s delighted.]

“What’s up, my good dudes! Munch Lad here, with another recipe straight from the brilliant mind and hands of the BA test kitchen’s best pastry chef, Eddie Kaspbrak! Today, we’re gonna be recreating Eddie’s Reese Cup recipe, because I love peanut butter and ALSO

because I want to thank Eddie Spaghetti himself for shouting me out on twitter the other day! That was . . .”

[Richie trails off, and his smile shifts into a smaller, softer one.]

“That was fuckin’ rad of him.”

[Cut to Richie standing at his counter, gesturing at the spread of ingredients before him.]

“So, we’re gonna need peanuts, vanilla, salt - just a pinch! - water, sugar -”

[A pale hand, nails painted bubblegum pink and fingers decorated in glimmering rings, darts into frame and snatches a chunk of milk chocolate from its bowl on the counter. Richie’s hand swats it away, but he’s too late: the crime has been committed, and the chocolate stolen.]

“Bev, what the fuck!”

“I’ve been craving chocolate!”

The trial-and-error process of some of Richie's videos results in a lot of things in Casa Bitchie: frustrated anger-eating oreos, a severe lack of counter space, flour and/or soy sauce deficits. But right now, Richie and Bev are enjoying one of the unexpectedly pleasant side-effects: an excess of bread.

"God, elven bread is so fucking *hard* ," Richie groans through a mouthful of non-elven bread. Or, at least, non-elven bread according to their taste test. Bev and Richie have a very specific, though seemingly-undefinable vision for what elven bread would truly be, and so far have both rejected every iteration of it that he's baked. All eight of them.

"Yeah, but at least this one is fucking *good* ," Bev says; Richie watches her dramatically pull apart a bun, taking a strong sniff of its center and letting out a satisfied sigh. "The raisins were a nice touch."

"Thank you," Richie says, ripping off a chunk of his own bun. It's a kind of brioche/french bread hybrid, and tastes so good that Richie is thinking about giving it its own video. "I think the cardamom really makes that one, though."

"Mmm, you're right," Bev agrees, biting into it. She rolls her eyes, moaning through her mouthful of bread, and Richie swats at her with a laugh. "Any old schmuck can use cinnamon. It takes a true stroke of genius to think of cardamom."

"Shut up," Richie says, giving her thigh a shove with his foot. Bev scoots away with a small cry of indignance. "At least the last video went over well, numbers-wise, so that I can take my time with this one."

Bev snorts, eyebrows raised. "My dude, you know that any video where you mention Eddie Kaspbrak From The BA Test Kitchen is gonna be a hit, right? People are eating that shit up."

"It's not shit! I do like his videos!" Richie protests. He won't hear a word against his tributes to Eddie's series, and Bev should definitely know better.

“Well, yeah, but regardless - those videos are popping off. People love them, and you and Eddie interacting. Which is why it’s so incredibly fun that I have a secret that you don’t know!” Bev sing-songs this, like a child. Richie responds like a grown adult: by chucking a bun at her head. It bounces off her temple, but she catches it just before it hits the floor, grinning triumphantly.

“Just fuckin’ tell me! Don’t leave me in suspense!” Richie whines.

Bev just shrugs, plucking a piece out of the bun Richie has thrown at her. “I don’t know . . . do you think I should tell you? Do you really think you deserve this knowledge?”

“I do!”

“Do you know the magic words?” Bev asks, smiling sweetly.

“I hate you,” Richie says, glaring at her.

“Close, but no dice,” Bev says, her smile broadening at his frustration. He’s best friends with the devil, he knows it. “Come on, you know them.”

“C’mon! You can’t just leave me in suspense like this! What happened to best friends tell each other everything?”

Bev snorts, and Richie tries to glare even harder. “Oh, yeah, I’m sure watching me suffer is *very* funny, Beverly.”

“It is,” Bev agrees, but ducks away from his second weaponized bun with a laugh. “Okay, okay, you wanna know?”

“Yes!”

“Okay . . . guess who’s gonna be featured in the August issue of Teen Vogue Online, styled and *personally emailed* by yours truly?”

There is a long pause; the turning gears in Richie’s brain are practically audible. When he lands on the answer, he yells loud enough that no amount of millionaire’s shortbread is going to fix it.

“NO FUCKING WAY!”

@trashbandicoot: don't u just love it when ppl u trust run off to live ur dreams !!!!

@trashbandicoot: anyway @missmartian have fun, i love/hate u !!!!!

@amunchylad reply to @trashbandicoot: wait wtf what did bev do

@bonappletea reply to @trashbandicoot: are you guys okay??? did bev do something???? is bev Cancelled ????

@marymac reply to @trashbandicoot: lmao ppl freaking out when you and bev have an unbreakable bond - did she get tickets to toy story 4 before you??

@sweddie reply to @trashbandicoot: am i insane for thinking this has something to do with eddie?? or am i just like totally biased lol

“Hey - did you wanna give us another chance to make fun of you?” Mike answers the phone on the sixth ring, which means Eddie’s patience is wearing thin when he starts his teasing.

Eddie scowls. "Ugh, shut up, no! I need . . . I don't fucking know, advice, or perspective, or some shit. You and Stan are my only option right now."

"Good to know I'm your *only* option, and not your *first* option," Mike says dryly. "Hold on, I'll put you on speakerphone."

"Only if it's just you two," Eddie says quickly.

"Yeah, just us," Mike assures him, and Eddie can now hear Stan's hum of agreement and the sound of chopping. "We're staying late to finish some recipes. What's up?"

"I - I, well, I got this email -" Eddie stumbles, uncertain of how to phrase his predicament without sounding ridiculous. Was he asking for permission to say yes? Was saying no even an option?

"You good?" Mike asks. The warm concern in his voice eases the tension in Eddie's chest just a bit, and he takes a deep breath, remembering the exercises from therapy: in on six, out on eight.

"Yeah," Eddie says finally, voice steady, determined. "Teen Vogue wants to feature me?"

"Hmm?" Stan's voice cuts into the call. "What?"

"Teen - Teen Vogue wants to feature me." Eddie tries to sound more definitive when he repeats this. Teen Vogue wants to feature him. Teen Vogue wants to feature him. "Teen Vogue wants to feature me."

"Yeah, no, we got it the second time," Stan says, and Eddie can hear his surprised smirk. "Congratulations?"

"Was that a question?" Eddie shoots back, his own smirk playing around his mouth.

"Yes, it was," Stan retorts. "The question being: why did you call us?" There is a tone to the way he says "us" that Eddie wants to decipher, something soft and protective, but he'll have to wait until later to tease Stan about it. Right now, he has an email to respond to.

“I was going to ask if you guys think I should say yes, but I think I know what I’m gonna do now,” Eddie explains. His head tilts to the side, thinking through his future response to Audra Phillips, Creative Planner. “So thanks, actually, I guess.”

“Alright!” Mike exclaims, loud enough to startle Eddie. The small squeak he lets out in response makes Mike laugh; it’s a long, rich laugh, and Eddie almost understands how Stan feels about Mike all the time through the way Eddie feels about Mike when he’s laughing. “Eddie Kaspbrak, celebrity chef and Vogue coverstar!”

“I’m not - it’s not - shut up!” Eddie snaps, flushing.

“Just remember us when you’re famous,” Stan says, laughter ringing in his voice, too.

“You literally have a twitter account dedicated to you and your fucking taste-testing expressions,” Eddie replies flatly.

He can hear Mike and Stan laughing when he hangs up, and can picture the two of them, all alone, baking together in the test kitchen, the lights of a NYC night spread outside the window before them. He absolutely *knows* he wants to tease Stan about that tomorrow.

To: Edward Kaspbrak, *Bon Appetit Magazine*

From: Teen Vogue Web, Creative Planning Department

Subject: Styling/Photoshoot

Eddie Kaspbrak,

I'm happy to introduce myself (digitally) as your stylist for your TVW feature for the August 2019 issue. I will be styling both you and the shoot itself, and so will accept any ideas or feedback you have up until June 28th, which is the deadline for shoot detail submissions and finalizations. I would like to meet at least once in person, given that we are both stationed in New York City, before that date, in order to discuss the details of the shoot and your feature as a whole. Would you be available any day between June 14th - June 19th?

Thank you so much for your time,

Beverly Marsh, Creative Planning

Eddie reads the email the following morning at his desk, a small smile inching across his face. *Beverly Marsh*. The stylist sounds professional, but somehow wildly intimidating and cool, though he can't for the life of him figure out why. Either way he responds, asking about her availability on June 16th.

By five pm, Eddie has a meeting scheduled with Beverly Marsh, of Teen Vogue's Creative Planning Department, and is embarrassed about how excited he is.

Notes for the Chapter:

ohhhhhh shit !!!! the impending eddie & bev friendship fun is gonna be so much fun to write holy shit (and no eddie doesn't know that beverly marsh is bev from themunchlad lmao)

also tysm to everyone for reading this fic, and

especially for commenting!! you're all so so kind and lovely, and make my day every time i see a new comment <3 <3

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if you ever wanna chat/yell at me to update or anything lmao <3

4. bevie is a cute super platonic friendship !!

June 16th rolls around sooner than Eddie had ever thought possible. It's the day after the deadline day for the July issue of the print magazine, which means Eddie is tired and a bit on edge as he goes about his morning routine. Waiting for the selected articles and recipes is never a fun time, and he wonders why he thought June 16th would be such a great time to meet his stylist for the Teen Vogue feature.

He putters about making coffee and choosing an outfit. He wants to seem stylish, yet casual. He doesn't really know exactly how to create that effect, however, and settles on a nice t shirt and soft dark jeans. The heat is beginning to descend upon New York as they all plunge into summer, and Eddie dresses for the humidity he constantly gripes about.

When he reaches the Teen Vogue offices, it's strange to veer in a different direction when his normal workplace is so close. He can see Fran's bright red sign from the entrance to their offices. But Eddie has booked the morning off specifically for this, and so takes a walk through the doors and into their elevator.

Beverly Marsh had emailed him the floor number, and told him to let the receptionist know who he is here to see. He does so, stumbling slightly in the process, but earning a bright smile from the girl behind the desk, who gets up and leads him further into Teen Vogue headquarters, and into a conference room.

"Beverly will be here in a minute," she says before slipping back out of the room.

Eddie tries to settle himself into a chair comfortably, which is proving to be more difficult than he thinks is normal, and admiring the view through the window. New York: a city of windows looking out into other windows. He is watching a man type furiously on a computer in the window opposite his when he hears the door of the conference room open and shut again.

He turns around, and standing there, fiery red hair and infamous

half-grin and all, is Bev from themunchlad's videos. Richie Tozier's best friend and roommate. Who is Bev, which is short for Beverly, which is followed by the last name Marsh, who is @missmartian on twitter, and who called Eddie "pert" in Richie's reese's cup video. The pieces of this puzzle are clicking together in Eddie's head, and as the connections dawn on him he resists the urge to groan.

"Eddie Kaspbrak?" Beverly says as she extends her hand, like she doesn't know perfectly well who he is. "I'm Beverly Marsh, the stylist for your feature."

God, she's miraculously professional. And somehow prettier in real life, as cliché as it is. Eddie can't stop staring at her, comparing the way her face moves on camera versus in person, and now he's been staring for far too long. He takes and shakes her hand, and drops it just as quickly. "Hi."

Beverly raises an eyebrow, but still takes a seat across from him at the table. She spreads a collection of folders in front of her, and looks back up at him. There's a glint in her eye that is now familiar to Eddie, though it's far more charming in person. Most things seem to be.

(Maybe the same can be said for Richie, Eddie wonders, before he shuts that entire train of thought down.)

"Let's go over some of the ideas our small team has brainstormed, yeah?"

Reese Cups From The Recipe Of An Angel

"He's very . . . *pert* , isn't he?"

[Richie turns to stare at Bev in shock, mouth hanging open. His hands are deep in a bowl of peanut butter mixture, and he looks ready to toss some at her. Maybe that is why Bev scoots a few inches away, though her shit-eating grin doesn't look like she's very apologetic.]

“ *Pert* ? That's what you think Eddie Kaspbrak is? *Pert*?!”

[Bev shrugs, though she's still eyeing the peanut butter quite carefully. She's ready to make a break for it, if need be.]

“He's just so . . . I think it's the shirt. The one with the flamingo on the pocket.”

“The flamingo shirt?!”

“Or it could be the incredible resemblance to an elf on a shelf - you know, ready to cause mischief at any moment?”

“Oh, fuck you! He might see this!”

Richie lays sprawled across his living room couch, laptop balanced on his knees as he types away at a sponsorship email. He could get into cirque du soleil with twisted positions like this one.

Bev had to go into the office today, because of her Very Important Meeting with Eddie Kaspbrak. And Richie isn't moping or even remotely jealous, no way. Bev can go style whoever she wants. It doesn't bother him in the least that she didn't even ask him if he wanted her to pass on any messages, or say hi on his behalf -

Okay, so maybe Richie is moping. Just a little bit.

But he feels he has a pretty good reason to. His best friend - potentially ex-best friend, as he told her over coffee this morning - is off fraternizing with someone Richie has admired for the past four months. And now that they have been brought together by the cosmos, Bev refuses to complete their destined connection because she wants to "keep things professional". The nerve of her!

He sends his email, which he's proofread three times; he's had too many miscommunications for work emails to even think about sending things unedited. Finished, Richie stretches his way to his feet, and pulls out his phone to open up twitter. There's a flood of excellent WeRateDogs posts for him to peruse, and he does so while making his way around the kitchen, lining up ingredients for the elven bread that he is determined to perfect. Ninth time's the charm, after all.

Richie, entirely unaware of the mild shitstorm he's about to be tagged in, sets down his phone after switching on spotify (the Lord of the Rings soundtrack, of course, for ambiance reasons). He goes about baking his elven bread, not a care in the world.

The meeting goes well, despite the elf on the shelf remark. Eddie brings it up at one point, just to be petty. Bev actually flushes for a second - something Eddie didn't think was possible - before giving him a brief nod and non-apology.

("I didn't mean to be rude, but I also can't find it in me to take it

back without finding a better comparison.” “Fair enough.” “Yeah?” “Yeah - I don’t see how much it matters, now that Stan and Mike have picked it up, too.”)

Bev outlines the thematic intentions behind the shoot - “We’re going for something really sort of fresh, brightly-coloured, summery - like the visual equivalent of a berry tart” “You don’t have to explain things in cooking metaphors, it’s okay” - and spreads sheets of potential wardrobe and makeup in front of Eddie.

“It’s not too elaborate - you’re not the cover or anything. So it’s pretty toned down, but still - well, still pretty, you know? We were thinking something very light and breathable, and you would definitely look good in sort of soft yellow now that I’m looking at you in person - maybe magenta, or violet . . .”

Bev takes notes, and also takes some of Eddie’s measurements, which tickles and makes Eddie squirm. He feels like a troublesome elf on the shelf in that moment, and Bev snorts when he mentions that.

“I told you.”

Then Bev asks him something unexpected: “Did you wanna go to Fran’s?”

Eddie never passes up on Fran’s because he isn’t a monster, so he agrees. On their way downstairs, a bag full of paperwork and notebooks slung over Bev’s shoulder, Eddie asks her just how professional it is to grab coffee with your styling client.

Bev just snorts again; it sounds the exact same in person. “You’re not paying me or anything. Feels perfectly ethical. Besides, I haven’t had coffee yet today, and I know you like Fran’s.”

“You do?” Eddie asks, confused.

“Dude, I follow you on instagram,” Bev says as she opens the door to Fran’s for him. Eddie ducks inside, and Bev follows, instantly claiming a round table in the corner. “Besides, you work at Bon Appetit. Everyone who works around here likes Fran’s.”

“I don’t suppose you know my order, too?” Eddie asks, just to be

snarky.

“I do not,” Bev shoots back, her smile knowing. It’s the same kind of smile she wears in Richie’s videos, like she’s in on the joke the two of you are painting. “But I can guess?”

“Oh, that’s okay,” Eddie says quickly, striding up to the counter. Bill waves at him, and he waves back.

Bev pouts a bit behind him, though it looks very put on. “Aww, I love that game.”

“And I love not owing you for my coffee,” Eddie says, then turns to Bill. “One medium cappuccino, please. And -” he turns to Bev, raises his eyebrows in question. “Yours is . . .?”

“A large dark roast, two creams two sugars,” Bev answers, and smiles at Bill over Eddie’s shoulder. “Hey, Bill.”

“Hey, long time no see,” Bill says with a grin. He turns his eyes to Eddie, and rings through the drinks.

“You two know each other?” Eddie asks Bev quietly as they take their seats at Bev’s claimed table. He wraps his hands securely around his cup, although he doesn’t need to leech the warmth from it; it takes so long for his winter-instincts to die off in the blur of spring and early summer.

“Yeah, we actually went to middle school together back in Portland,” Bev says, taking a long sip of her coffee. She looks relieved to finally have one in her grasp. “Haven’t seen him since, and then he appears in my regular coffee place.”

“Weird,” Eddie agrees. “But maybe it’s fate.”

Bev turns a bewildered look on Eddie, then lets out a sharp peal of laughter. “Oh my God, me and Bill? No way. He’s a little . . . well, we just wouldn’t work out, I don’t think. And I don’t really think I’m his type anyway.”

“But you’re so . . .” Eddie frowns, studying Bev’s amused expression. “You’re so pretty and cool, you know? I figured you’d be anyone’s

type.”

“Am I your type, Eddie?”

“Given the box you check off regarding gender on all government surveys, I’m gonna say you aren’t.”

Bev laughs again, though this one seems startled out of her. “Holy shit, really? I thought it was just a rumour or something. I’ve never found confirmation from you anywhere, so I didn’t want to make any assumptions.”

“You didn’t find any because I’ve never given any.” Eddie shrugs, though the idea makes him a little bit anxious; were people really searching the internet for confirmation of his sexuality? He hadn’t realized how significant that would be to other people. Although, given that the personal life section was his first stop on celebrity wikipedia pages, he probably shouldn’t be very surprised. “I’m not in the closet or anything - Stan and Mike and everyone I work with know. My - my family knows.” He swallows, hard, the lump in his throat instinctive. “But I guess it just never felt like something I wanted to broadcast online.”

“I get that,” Bev says, nodding sagely. Eddie gets the feeling that Bev can nod sagely to just about any revelation, no matter how odd; she doesn’t seem like a very phaseable person. “Ri - some people I know are the same, sort of. Well, no, maybe a little more closeted, but still. Similar.”

Well, that is certainly a fascinating slip-up to Eddie.

“I don’t know why I’ve never said anything really,” Eddie says, mulling it over, electing to ignore the implications of Bev’s slip-up. If Richie’s isn’t straight, it isn’t his place to pry into it. This is a highly professional business meeting. (Although now there’s a kernel of curiosity burning in Eddie’s chest. He tells himself that it’s the same kind that fuels his wikipedia page searching.) “I’ve got plenty of fantastic gay jokes that I could start using in episodes. It’s really a shame not to say any of them when we’re filming.”

“Then I say go for it,” Bev laughs. She leans back in her seat, and

Eddie is struck by how natural the two of them feel. He isn't sure if having someone call you an elf on the shelf is just an excellent ice breaker, or if it's because Bev is such a natural people-person, but it feels nice. Calm. Maybe he should get coffee with her more often.

"Maybe I will," Eddie says with a small smile.

@sweetsboyeddie reply to @mayybel: wait is this real??? do they know each other???? wHAT?????

@mayybel reply to @sweetsboyeddie: dude idk i just saw them together at fran's, it's wild - do you think they're setting up that collab yet??

@bonappletea reply to @mayybel: oh my god oh my god oh my GOD bev !! pls just set them up on a date already !!

@xtinamay reply to @bonappletea: how do you know they aren't on a date?? they look pretty friendly

@bonappletea reply to @xtinamay: oh my god you're so right - we don't know if eddie's even gay

@sweddie reply to @mayybel: bro they look so fuckin into each other wth

@reillyrowland2 reply to @mayybel: @eddiek @missmartian hey uhhhh ????? y'all would be so cute tbh, you could make fun of @trashbandicoot together

@justalilbean reply to @mayybel: @eddiek @missmartian can i suggest Bevie? bc wow cute ship name alert !!

Richie has done it. He has made elven bread. It comes in small, palm-sized buns, is perfectly fluffy, and is seasoned with cardamom and thyme, because he is a genius who would use cardamom.

He snaps a photo of a finished one with a huge bite taken out of it, and opens up twitter to spread the word of the impending video.

He is instead met with a barrage of tagged replies to one tweet by @mayybel, and what he finds does not thrill him. If anything, it dulls the sweetness of his bread victory.

Bev, who is curled up on the couch with a book about lesbian pirates, looks up when Richie comes marching in. "Everything okay?"

He silently holds out his phone to her, and she reads through the tweets. Then he thinks he sees her read through them again. This second run-through seems to strike home, and she looks back up at him in abject horror.

"You have got to be fucking *kidding* me!"

Eddie, Stan, and Mike, being the terrible slackers that they are, aren't occupied with eleven bread recipes that afternoon and evening. They're puttering around the test kitchen, boiling and baking and mixing things, which leaves them with ample moments to simply lean against a counter and scroll through their phone for a thirty second update on the outside world.

It's Mike who finds it, and shows Eddie with a grim expression.

"You're not gonna like this, but you should probably see it," he says, and places his phone into Eddie's hand like it's a live grenade.

Eddie only has to read through the tweets once to gently place the phone back into Mike's hand, and immediately begin pacing.

"Is he -?" Stan begins, but Mike holds the phone out for the second viewing of the afternoon. Stan's brow crinkles as he reads, and he's full-on frowning by the time he finishes. "What the fuck?"

"Yes, Stanley, that is the exact right question!" Eddie gestures at Stan with both hands, but it doesn't look violent in intent, so Stan doesn't flinch back. "The perfect question: what the fuck?!" Then he turns around and switches off the burner under his pot of boiling simple syrup. Eddie Kaspbrak is furious, but he is also a professional.

"You guys were just . . . getting coffee. How does that become -?"

Eddie cut in over Mike, which Mike doesn't mind given the circumstances. "I do not know, Michael! I do not! Know! Shit." He stirs the simple syrup into the bowl of his stand mixer, and busies himself with adding in the other ingredients. "Fuck. Shit. Motherfucker. Goddamnit. Shit."

"Yeah, no, definitely," Mike agrees, tone placating. "But I mean . . . Eddie, how're you gonna sort out . . . without . . .?"

Eddie perks up, which startles Mike and Stan equally. They watch as he turns around, a slight glint in his eyes.

"I can't," Eddie says. His voice is determined. "Screw it. I'm gonna do something stupid."

“You - well, you don’t have to -” Mike begins, but Eddie shakes his head.

“Maybe I should rephrase that: I *want* to do something stupid.”

And so he does. Eddie Kaspbrak, fingers flying over his phone screen, does something stupid. But *fuck* does it ever feel cathartic.

@eddiek: [casually steps out of the closet] anyway, about that roasted squash stan made www.bonappetit.com/recipe/summer-roasted-squash-olive-oil

@bonappletea reply to @eddiek: oh my GOD

@sweddie reply to @eddiek: an absolutely iconic coming out tweet

@amunchylad reply to @eddiek: honey we been knew, but thanks for the confirmation - you and bev are such cute super-platonic friends !!

@sweetsboyeddie reply to @eddiek: #bevie is for friends and friends only babey !

It is eleven pm, and Richie and Bev have finally finished cleaning up

the kitchen. The elven bread is being eaten, and they have been following the #bevie twitter drama for the past two hours.

The update they're now presented with is absolutely riveting.

"It sucks that he had to confirm it like this," Bev says, sounding genuinely apologetic. She's wearing her 'I'll-buy-you-a-muffin-tomorrow' face, so Richie knows she's going to see Eddie tomorrow. This excites him more than he's comfortable with.

"Yeah, it really blows," Richie agrees. He's still staring at Eddie's tweet - how can he be so calm and collected? He's making a joke of it, but owning it so well; Richie could never master the two of those together.

Bev must sense this odd frustration lingering on Richie because she raises a questioning eyebrow at him, before saying, "He's still really brave for saying it. He told me he was already out in his personal life, he'd just never confirmed it online before - outside of an old tumblr he had in high school," she adds with a snort. "Like the rest of us."

There's something in Bev's voice that Richie feels compelled to defend himself from, though he doesn't like why. "He's brave, yeah, but I mean - it sucks that he had to. It's . . . I mean, it's probably still hard - for him." He's getting awkward now, but he can't seem to stop himself from elaborating. "Because, you know, it's difficult . . . it's private and shit, and people can be so . . ."

"Richie?"

"Yeah?"

Bev pats the spot on the couch next to her. He takes the seat, and waits. Bev is smiling at him, soft and patient, though he knows her lecturing tone when he hears it. "It's probably hard for some people. But it's still - it can be worth it. If it's something somebody is hypothetically thinking about, it can be helpful to talk it out with somebody they hypothetically know who hypothetically cares about them -" and by now, Bev's smile has morphed from patient to teasing, "- because then they can hypothetically get more comfortable with hypothetically more people hypothetically knowing about their

hypothetical identity, which hypothetically -”

“Yeah, yeah, I get it, shut up,” Richie says, swatting her shoulder jokingly. Bev grins, and he does, too; it’s hard not to feel happy when Bev is happy. “I just . . .”

“Would this hypothetical person like to hypothetically talk some stuff out?” Bev asks.

Richie sighs, and drapes himself over the back of the couch, like a listless shirt left out to dry from the wash. “I guess they hypothetically might.”

the only food in this video are my stress snacks

[Richie Tozier is sitting cross-legged on his couch, and is eating out of a box of oreos. He is laughing with someone who’s standing behind the camera, and then winks at them. Bev Marsh’s voice comes from that spot moments later, to no one’s surprise.]

“Okay, okay, we’re rolling.”

[Richie nods and straightens, facing the camera directly. He fidgets with the oreo box, but takes a deep breath.]

“So, there’s some stuff I’d like to talk about, if everybody’s okay with that. Because I think I’m okay with it, now. Maybe.”

Notes for the Chapter:

so this was some fun drama, and will definitely be expanded upon in future chapters - mostly once eddie and richie (finally omg) meet. i hope everyone liked it!!

a fun update concerning this fic is that i have decided to destroy myself by writing two companion fics to it, all of them multi-chapter, all of them being updated simultaneously. this one focuses on reddie, the one i started publishing last night focuses on stanlonbrough, and the third that i'll start soon focuses on benverly. i just wanted room to properly flesh out each relationship, and not have to flop back and forth between all three every chapter (which is the one thing about my reddie/stenbrough holiday au fic that idk if i'm happy with rn). so they're all in one series now, but the stanlonbrough fic is right <https://archiveofourown.org/works/21741976/chapters/51868591>! hopefully everyone is okay with this. <3 <3

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if u wanna chat/yell or anything <3 <3

Author's Note:

i promise i'm still 100% committed to my holiday fic lmao, but i couldn't get this idea out of my head (also i love claire saffitz). so here??? this will definitely be expanded, and all the lads will be featured, but for now here pls just take my nonsense (also hey might change the title bc it's Bad)

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if u wanna tell me to get my shit together and only have one wip at a time

5. the B stands for Bastard

The next time Eddie and Bev meet, the morning of the shoot, it is decidedly hidden away in her office. When he first steps through the door of the conference room, he and Bev simply look at each other for a very long moment. Then Bev cracks, and lets out an undignified snort, and nods to the chair across from hers at the table.

“Dude, you okay?”

Eddie shrugs, taking his seat, and then looks back up at Bev with an apology already on his lips. “I’m so -”

“If you’re about to apologize, then you aren’t nearly as cool as I thought you were,” Bev interrupts him. She doesn’t sound angry, which helps Eddie stay somewhat calm. But the disapproving quirk of her mouth is odd.

“I just wanted to say - I mean - I didn’t mean to - to make anyone feel like maybe they had to, you know . . . do what I did.” Eddie stumbles through as much of his apology as he can without directly saying he’s sorry, which is more difficult than he thought it would be.

Bev raps out a rhythm on the table with her fingertips, and Eddie raises his eyes to meet hers. She smiles, bright and growing, and Eddie felt a slight loosening in his chest. “You don’t have to worry about that,” she says, clearly choosing her words carefully. “It’s not . . . no one felt pressured, or anything, because of what you did. Things just move in alignment sometimes.”

Richie’s name hangs palpably in the air between them, though Eddie isn’t sure if it’s an uncomfortable presence. It feels more like a truth shared between him and Bev, a thin little thread connecting them across the table. Though Bev’s portion of themunchlad’s videos has come up, neither of them have mentioned Richie during their meetings, or the messages they’ve sent each other on twitter. Bev and Eddie have danced around the munch lad himself for the past two and a half weeks, tactfully and discreetly as possible. Now, though, that respectful silence seems to carry too much weight to ignore any longer.

“I’m glad that . . . they . . .” Eddie frowns, feeling ridiculous. They both know who they’re talking about. They both know why Eddie’s first instinct when stepping through the door was to apologize. He takes a breath, steadies himself, and continues, “I’m glad he didn’t feel obligated to do that. That’s always a shitty feeling, and I would never want to put that on somebody.”

Bev nods, and the corners of her eyes crinkle in a true smile. Eddie looks at her then, and thinks that if she wasn’t a she, and he wasn’t into hes, that he, too, would be at least a little bit in love with her.

“So, the wardrobe for the shoot is finally finished, and we were thinking of doing a test run for lighting and staging and whatnot. In the mood to be my guinea pig?”

Eddie sighs, and Bev’s laugh rings through the room.

[A photo of Eddie Kaspbrak, glaring up at the camera with a face scrunched in fury, mouth half-open, presumably saying something scathing. He’s dressed in a fluttery white shirt and butter-yellow slacks, and is standing in a barren studio with an enormous potted plant looming ominously in the background.]

365,782 likes

bevmarsh oh look, another incredibly romantic moment between two lovers

billdenbro you two are so cute and definitely in love 100% for sure

eddiekaspbrak oh my GOD when did you take this?

bevmarsh when you were threatening my life for sticking you with the pin lmao

munchladtozier bevoluminous, i actually cannot believe you

bevmarsh it was funny and i'm running with it, fuck you :))

The thing about Bev working with Eddie on this feature is that Richie has both met and not-met Eddie several times, in person and online. They have spent two and a half weeks in each other's vicinity, glancing out of the corner of their eyes at each other, but never directly speaking to one another. Richie, for his part, is nervous; he keeps wondering if maybe his video was a tad too enthusiastic, and did really creep Eddie out. Eddie . . . well, Richie sometimes lies awake at night thinking Eddie hasn't reached out because he *is* creeped out. (Then he usually gets up and makes scones, which are nice and time-consuming, at three am. Bev doesn't mind waking up to fresh scones, anyway, though she does shoot him worried looks over each new batch.)

Richie wonders exactly when he and Eddie will finally collide, given their absurd proximity, and wonders how horrendously embarrassing he'll be when they finally do. He's wondering all of this very loudly at this very moment, to Bill. (Bev had taken Richie down to Fran's to introduce the two of them with a brief spiel of "both from Portland" and "he's cool and talks about books a lot". Richie has since then attempted to maintain with Bill that he doesn't read - as in, refuses to

engage with the written word in any form. He has Bev read Fran's menu options to him, just to keep up the charade.) It's the end of his shift, and Bill is wiping down the counter at Fran's while Richie sips on a mocha frappuccino and sighs heavily.

"I just . . . I don't want to make an idiot of myself, you know? I really do think he's great, and a brilliant chef . . . he's so clever, Bill. Have you seen any of his videos?"

"Mhm," Bill hums, tossing the rag into the sink on the far wall behind the counter, and sorting out the pile of discarded sugar packets people have left on the table.

"Yeah, so I just - I really admire him, you know? Not in, like, a fanboy way, or whatever, but I think he's good at what he does, and . . . god, you know how, like, you would want to meet another author who is cool and good at what they do, and is actually super successful doing it?"

"Am I not successful?" Bill counters, tossing Richie a frown.

"You aren't published, Billiam," Richie says, pointing at Bill with his frappuccino. Bill concedes with a one-sided shrug, and Richie continues. "But, so, yeah. It's like that. But I think I fucked it up with the video - I was just trying to be nice or whatever, you know? But now I probably seem like a freak."

"You used one of his recipes," Bill argues. "It's normal for you to credit him."

"I called him cute," Richie says. He can feel a blush creeping up his neck. "And I said he was the Einstein of baking."

"Oh." Bill pauses, then snorts. "I mean, fuck, dude. You really did this to yourself, huh?"

"That's terrible advice, Denbrough," Richie snaps, scowling. "Very nice, laugh at the man in the throes of despair!"

"Oh, relax. You'll be fine, Eddie probably doesn't even care that much. He's never said anything about you being creepy when he's here, even when Bev leaves him perfectly wide openings to."

“Bev leaves him openings to call me creepy?”

“You know what I mean. When she brings you up, you know, without really bringing you up. Gives him the chance to say something about you.”

“And what does he say?” Richie asks eagerly.

“Nothin’. He’s chill, dude.” Bill gives him a reassuring smile, and Richie sighs again.

“That was . . . *much* better advice. Just so you know. Officially a 7.2/10.”

“Shut up.”

“Make me,” Richie says with a smirk, sipping obnoxiously on his drink. Bill chucks a sugar packet at him.

“I watched your video, by the way,” Bill says, and Richie can feel the flush start to return in full force. He glances down at the tabletop, uncertain if he wants to look at Bill in the eye during what’s coming.

“I’m proud of you, man. That took serious guts.” Richie looks up, just for a moment, to see Bill watching him with a soft smile. It’s still reassuring, still the Bill Denbrough Smile Of Support, and Richie is grateful that Bev has such excellent ex-(middle school) boyfriends. “Anyone says anything different, and they’re a fucking asshole.”

“Yeah.” Richie nods slowly, uncertainly. “Thanks. That - that means a lot.” *Coming from you* gets lodged in his throat, because it’s not quite true; it’s more like *coming from anyone* . He drinks his coffee - well, mostly non-coffee - and clears his throat. “Should I start wearing merch for it?”

Bill snorts. “Only the nice stuff. You gotta search out the cute gay stuff - so much of it is so tacky. And you aren’t a college freshman finally allowed to express their sexuality, so you can skip that phase entirely.” Bill shrugs, glancing away from Richie, focusing on straightening the already-straightened sugar packets. He doesn’t look nervous, but there’s something self-conscious in the set of his shoulders. “I can send you some links to some nice sites. If you

want.”

Richie’s eyebrows raise slowly as the meaning of Bill’s words dawn on him, and he smiles, brighter than the evening sunset outside. “Sure, that’d be cool. Although, and I think you should probably know this by now: tacky is sort of my Thing.”

“I do know, actually,” Bill says, and they both laugh. It’s nice, and Richie likes how light he feels in this moment, even without Bev to catch him.

the only food in this video are my stress snacks

[Richie Tozier lounges against his couch, half-draped over the arm, and he’s gesturing like a tipsy suburban wine mom on a rant about her husband. His hair is a mess from him running his fingers through it, and his box of oreos sits near-empty on the cushion next to him. Bev is giggling behind the camera.]

“Anyway, there was this one guy in my tenth grade algebra class - oh my *god*, could he get it! You’ve seen the yearbook photos, Bev, you fucking know I’m right.”

“Don’t drag me into this, holy *shit* .”

“Into what?! Anyway, so there was that one, but also this guy I met at summer camp when I was a kid - was I a horny kid? Is that a terrible thing to say? I had a crush on like half the people I went to

school with, I was so easy to fuckin' impress -"

[Cut to Richie, sitting up a bit straighter on the couch, shrugging abashedly at the camera. There is no giggling, though from how Richie's eyes dart up to a space above it occasionally, Bev is likely still behind it.]

"Yeah, no one needs to see more of that footage. But anyway, the point is . . . I'm bi. Sexual. Bisexual. The big ol' B. There's a B in LGBT, and it stands for Bastard."

[Richie points to himself with his thumbs, giving the camera a cheesy, rakish grin.]

"That's me!"

Notes for the Chapter:

i'm publishing two back-to-back short chapters bc they don't quite meld together comfortably, but they're also both finished lmao

tysm to everyone for reading, and the Big Meeting is currently being written and i'm very hyped aaaahhhhhh

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if you wanna chat/yell about these nerds/anything <3 <3

6. are you homemade twizzlers? bc i think you're sweet too

New York City in August is stiflingly hot: the pavement shimmers, the sky is a blue so bright it hurts to look at, and the current of the rivers might just be the bubbling as they reach their boiling point. Or maybe Eddie's thinking too much about the lobster boil he and Mike made for a video the other day. He can't tell, and he almost blames the heat for his own confusion. How can he think straight when he being cooked from the inside out?

"Mike," he whines, forehead pressed to his desk. "Mike, I think I'm dying."

"God, you really aren't made for heat, are you?" Mike asks with a snort. "Dude, we have air conditioning."

"Yeah? And also, like, ten ovens!" Eddie shoots back without moving. His eyes are closed, as if not seeing the sun will help him not feel the heat radiating off of it. This doesn't work.

"Eddie," Stan says. Eddie doesn't move. "Eddie. Eddie. Eddie, pick up your phone, or I will hide it again."

Eddie rolls his head to the side to glare at Stan; he sees his phone lighting up further away on his desk, its buzzing a steady sensation where his temple meets the desk. "Fine. You're the worst, by the way."

"I usually am," Stan says flatly, turning back to his computer. "Thanks for the reminder."

Eddie picks up his phone, and sees Bev's contact photo on the screen: a picture of Bev crouching next to a dog they met on the sidewalk outside of Fran's, giving the camera two thumbs up. He accepts the call, and doesn't get a word out before Bev is saying "Eddie, go online!"

"Oh?" Eddie puts the phone on speaker, sets it down on his desk, and opens his internet browser. "Online is a big place, Bev - where am I

going?”

“Where else? The Teen Vogue website, you glorious little fool,” Bev says; Eddie can hear her grin through the line.

“Really?” His spine goes ramrod straight, and he opens up the website as fast as his fingers can type. It flashes across his screen - the cover feature is an indie singer with long black hair and blue tulle cascading around her - and scrolls and clicks through until he finds his feature. It’s not huge, just enough to have filled two pages of a regular print magazine, but Eddie still finds himself awestruck for a second. The two photos included are gorgeous, one with the yellow slacks Bev had tailored tightly to his legs, and the other a shot of him eating from a plate of brownies (Mike’s, which he had been sharing with Bev and the photographer during the shoot).

“Damn, Eddie, you look pretty good,” Mike says from behind him; Eddie glances up to see his teasing smile. “Though I hope you shouted out whose brownies you brought?”

“I did say it,” Eddie says, scanning through the article. “I don’t know where . . . oh, no.”

“Oh no?” Mike leans down, reading through the article alongside Eddie. “Did you give them the wrong recipe?”

“No.” Eddie’s eyes can’t tear away from the words, though he wants to so he can hide in the cool darkness of the cold storage room, or somewhere equally hidden. “I - I didn’t realize that this would be on the record.”

“What did you say?” Stan asks, bending over on Eddie’s other side to read. “It can’t be . . . oh. *Oh* . Oh my god, Eddie.” He doesn’t sound panicked, which is good, but the startled amusement in his voice isn’t helping matters.

“Yeah, *oh my god* .”

Eddie lets his forehead drop down to his desk again.

He asks me to just call him Eddie - “I make homemade twizzlers for a living, you don’t have to dignify it.”

“Does working for the *Bon Appetit* Youtube channel not feel like a professional job?”

Eddie laughs, and responds with a shrug: “I guess not? I think it depends on what we’re up to and who’s in the test kitchen - we’re all a sort of cooking family, so we do have a lot of fun, so it doesn’t feel like work. But it does take a lot of work to organize the videos and we put a lot of time and effort into them, so it still does sometimes. It’s as much work as a professional cooking show on cable, I think.”

“And you have as much of a fanbase as most professional shows, potentially even more. How does that affect your work?”

“Well, we don’t know about that for sure - Alton Brown’s reach is long, and pretty hard to measure.” Eddie laughs again. “But it influences how we sort of work on-camera, and how we come up with videos - we’re making what a specific audience might want to see.”

“You yourself have garnered quite the following on other social media platforms, and even a few notably public fans.”

“Are you talking about Rich- themunchlad?”

“So you are aware of him beyond his one video. How does your relationship with other cooking content creators on the platform affect you, and the rest of the team?”

“Well, it definitely encourages us, makes us feel like we’re doing something worthwhile. It’s always nice to be recognized by your peers.”

“Very true. But I wonder, for you particularly, how it felt to see that first video of his, and if you’ve kept up with his continued praise of your series?”

“I . . . he’s very flattering. We’re all very flattered. He’s very [. . .] talented. He’s good, on his channel. So it’s nice to know he also likes our stuff.”

“And that teased collab - would you ever consider it? And how do you imagine it happening?”

“I think it would be really [. . .] fun. And he’s, you know, so talented, and good at his stuff, that it would be good. He’s good.”

“And Bev over there is a friend of Richie Tozier’s, so I have to ask: have you two met? And what’s so good about Richie Tozier From The MunchLad Kitchen?”

“I see what you did there, that’s [. . .]. We haven’t met, no, or talked or anything, so there’s not much to tell [. . .]. He’s very good. He’s funny, I [. . .] I don’t have a list, like he did. I’m not sure. I guess [. . .] Bev says he’s sweet. I believe her. He seems sweet, you know, and I guess [. . .] yeah.”

Richie is asleep on the couch. He didn’t mean to be: he was watching *Arrested Development* and then, suddenly, out like a light. Maybe it has something to do with his inability to get a wink of sleep when he thinks about Eddie Kaspbrak, and coming to inevitable contact with him. Despite Bill’s kind reassurance, the idea is still haunting him.

So he’s fast asleep when Bev comes home, which is why she has to push him off the couch to tell him to check the website.

“You didn’t *have* to push me!” He exclaims, though he’s already clambering back up onto it and pulling out his laptop.

“I did, actually, because you need to be one hundred percent awake to read this shit,” Bev says. “I didn’t write it, I’m only in charge of the photos - which, uh, you’re welcome, by the way -”

Richie physically chokes on his own spit as he’s reading, and Bev knows he’s found it. “Yeah, dude. He . . . he said that.”

He seems sweet.

He’s going to explode. He can sense it. Richie leaps to his feet and starts pacing, wide circles around the apartment to try and rid himself of the energy building up under his skin. He needs to move for a bit, go running or something, maybe not running because he doesn’t run, but maybe -

“Dude.” Bev’s hands are on his shoulders, and she’s grinning at him. Richie comes to a halt. He can feel himself smiling, too, and it’s as if the realization lets him put himself into the smile, really emotionally

commit to it; he feels light and glowing and floating, he feels ready to fly right out the apartment window.

“Dude, that’s real, I was standing right there,” she says. “I think he didn’t know it was part of the interview, because Veronica is weird and sneaky like that, but it was and here you go. Early birthday present.”

“He thinks I’m sweet.” The words are like candy on his tongue. Taffy, all sugary and fruity and lasting forever, lingering well after it’s been swallowed. It lingers. The sweetness. *He seems sweet*. “Fuck, Bev. He doesn’t think I’m a creep. We could be friends. Like, actual acquaintances.”

“Yes! I have his number, if you want, or -”

“No,” Richie says, opening his phone. “I want to do this the old-fashioned way.”

Eddie is munching out of a bag of doritos when he gets the notification.

He’s managed to turn this into a very successful self-pity night, he thinks: junky snacks, a Nicholas Sparks movie on in the background, and in his pyjamas by five o’clock. Mike and Stan had seen him off when he left work with their (teasing) condolences. Mike had leaned in and reassured him that what he said isn’t even that embarrassing, and Eddie had had to turn on his heel and leave. It *is* embarrassing, *desperately* embarrassing, and he needs to wallow in it for a couple of hours before getting his shit together and moving on with his life. Is that so wrong?

So he’d said Richie Tozier seems sweet, and good, and talented, and funny . . . does Eddie have his own list about Richie? Is that what’s happened here: a role reversal where Eddie needs to sing Richie’s

praises from the rooftops? He isn't sure how he feels about that prospect. He was just trying to be nice in the interview - he still thought Richie was immature, and ridiculous, and maybe too obscene on twitter for Eddie to have followed him without reason (does he have a reason now?). So he doesn't like Richie Tozier as, like, a person, right? He doesn't hate him, he doesn't think he's an idiot, but he . . . he knows he just wouldn't get along with him. Being in a kitchen with Richie sounds like an absolute nightmare to Eddie.

The notification goes off on his computer, which he tried to get some work done on before shoving off his lap and onto the other end of the couch. Eddie scrambles over to it awkwardly, and picks it up to read the alert.

Twitter - one new message

Eddie frowns. Despite his following, people really don't DM him on twitter that often; it's something he politely requests of followers he doesn't know. *Someone clearly didn't get that memo* .

He opens up the sight and clicks on his DMs, ready to let them know his general policy surrounding the messages, when he sees the username.

@trashbandicoot: hey, are you homemade twizzlers? bc i think you're pretty sweet too

Eddie falls back onto his couch cushion, aghast as he stares at the message. That's Richie Tozier in his DMs. Richie, who Eddie has been so careful not to speak with or interact with directly, friend of Bev, who is now Eddie's friend, potential future collaborator according to Eddie's video supervisor. Richie, within reach.

@eddiek: what the fuck was that??

Eddie flops onto his side, staring at his laptop. Richie DMed him, after two months of awkward silence and non-interactions, and it's a fucking *baking pick up line*? Some part of Eddie feels like, having seen Richie's videos, he shouldn't be this surprised; but most of Eddie still just wants to march over to the cozy apartment he's peeked into through the internet, and give Richie a piece of his mind in person. Bev has invited him over a few times, although Eddie has declined each one. Maybe now is the time to pull one of his classic Eddie Shout-And-Dips: it's where Eddie storms into a room, shouts about something, and then vanishes again. Mike named it, and Stan brings it up constantly to tease him.

One of the only thing stopping him from doing a Shout-And-Dip is the fact that Bev, having never gotten a yes, has never had reason to text their address to Eddie, so he doesn't actually know where to go.

Suddenly thinking about Bev, Eddie has an idea: he calls Bev.

Bev's phone is going off on the coffee table, and she has to pry herself out of Richie's celebratory/relief hug to pick it up. What she sees on the screen is enough to send her into a fit of uncontrollable excited giggles.

"What?" Richie demands, watching her with wide eyes from the arm of the couch he's perched on. He seems both desperate to know and also not ready for any more surprises. Richie is surprised-out, which is a state Bev is excited to see him in. In her humble opinion, it's been too long since he was this thrilled.

"You'll never fucking guess who it is," Bev says with a grin, holding the phone to her chest while it rings. Eddie will keep letting it ring, she can sense it; the guy called her for a reason, and he doesn't seem

the type to let something go that easily.

“Who? My dad?” Richie jokes, and Bev rolls her eyes.

“Ugh, god no, you think he has my number? It’s way better than that.” She turns the phone around, holding it out to him, and Richie looks about ready to keel over off the couch.

“No fucking way.”

“Yes! He doesn’t think you’re a creep, *and* he’s calling your best friend! You’re in the clear, dude!” Bev clicks accept call, and Richie dives onto the couch, watching her with awe and relief in his gaze.

“What’s up my dude?” Bev asks.

Eddie hesitates before saying, “Um, can I - can I talk to you?”

“Sure, yeah, what’s up?” Bev bites her lip to keep from giggling, as she watches Richie squirm around nervously and excitedly on the couch, like a hyperactive worm.

“Richie, uh . . . well, he DM’ed me on twitter, and I wanted to know if . . . well, do you know what’s up with the pick-up line?”

Bev nearly drops the phone. She whips around to stare at Richie. “I don’t know what’s up with the pick-up line, actually, but Richie’s sitting on the couch right now telling me not to hand him the phone, so, if it’s okay with you, I think I’m gonna hand him the phone.”

“Oh, uh, okay, well -” Eddie stumbles.

Bev chucks her phone at Richie, who fumbles as he panics and catches it, clapping it to his ear so hard it probably hurt. His voice sounds wobbly and strange as he says “Uh, hi?” and Bev takes a seat on the carpet, watching the chaos unfold. She loves moments where she is allowed to be the best, and worst, friend imaginable.

Notes for the Chapter:

what's up everybody!! second chapter of the two-chapter-update - the next one might be a few days bc

i'm kinda busy with work, but i want to start taking my time with these fics and really doing the ideas justice. hopefully a slower update schedule but better/longer chapters is a fair trade off.

tysm to everyone who's reading, you're all so so kind, and everyone who leaves comments is an angel and i adore you <3 <3

also happy harry styles album release day lmao <3

Author's Note:

i promise i'm still 100% committed to my holiday fic lmao, but i couldn't get this idea out of my head (also i love claire saffitz). so here??? this will definitely be expanded, and all the lads will be featured, but for now here pls just take my nonsense (also hey might change the title bc it's Bad)

hmu on tumblr @thatsjustfangtastic if u wanna tell me to get my shit together and only have one wip at a time